United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

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MEMORANDUM

TO:

FROM: INR/WEA - Alan W. Lukens

SUBJECT: Reflections on the Mood in Europe

The attached thoughts are based principally on my trip through Northern Europe in October but include some musings on the current mood in Europe as well.

Attachment:
As stated.

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Some Thoughts on the Mood in Northern Europe - Fall 1983

Introduction

Northern Europeans in this last quarter of 1983 are uneasy and tense. Some look forward to INF deployment with hostility, some with acceptance of the inevitable, but very few with enthusiasm. Many view US-European relations with alarm, some apathetically, almost none with creative ideas for improving these relations. A forest and trees syndrome seems to be in effect almost everywhere in that small issues overshadow larger ones; critics of the Alliance are certainly more vocal than its supporters.

Two weeks in October on a visit to Scandinavia, Benelux, FRG, and the UK were not sufficient to draw many lasting conclusions. Indeed, the purpose was to define the mood, pick up impressions and exchange ideas. Discussions in each country with Embassy officers, with Foreign Office personnel and in some countries with opposition leaders focused on INF deployment, cohesion within the Alliance, and problems besetting the Economic Community. Perhaps the most telling impression throughout the trip was the manner in which Social Democrats, formerly in government majorities, had reneged on the 1979 NATO decision and were not cooperating with peace groups to forestall deployment of Pershings and Cruise missiles.

There is a dichotomy between an apparent majority in Europe in favor of NATO and the widespread opposition to INF. This is reflected in the generation gap--the older ones remember the War and the Marshall Plan, the younger ones Vietnam and Watergate. In Germany, there is much introspection underway, ranging from the "Who am I?" line to one of espousing German unity and neutrality in preference to NATO and EC membership. Almost everywhere there seems to be a myopia on world problems, as each is addressed from a very parochial base. The result is a lack of understanding of US objectives and the fact that we have to face problems on a world-wide basis.

Sweden

Sweden's case is a special one, so some of the commonalities which apply to the Northern tier of NATO are not applicable here. Nevertheless, the NATO umbrella is very much a part of the Swedish psyche even when the skies are clear. Nats Bergquist, in charge of Europe at the Foreign Office, and Katarina Brodin, political advisor to the Defense Minister, both stressed that "stability" was the key word in the Nordic area and referred to their "quiet corner of Europe." They went on to say that the "Nordic balance"

was "stable but not static" and had to be flexible enough to meet new challenges. Among these were the Soviet build-up in the Kola Peninsula, Soviet submarine incursions, and the perception, if not the fact, that the Soviet northern fleet had grown in size and activity.

Sovietologist Goran Lundstrom analyzed the recent Soviet threats to Sweden. Some of these--behind the scene--were heavy-handed and overbearing; intimidation was the key note. In looking at the Soviet submarine incursions, which, according to Lundstrom were more frequent than the GOS admitted publicly, the Swedes feared that new technological break-throughs would leave their defenses outmoded. Specifically, the Swedes thought that Russian mini-subs, operating from mother ships, could slip under the present anti-submarine nets protecting their naval bases. Swedish-Soviet watchers do not buy the line that the military has preempted the political leadership in Moscow; on the contrary, they assume that every submarine incursion which took place was sanctioned by the hierarchy.

One expert expounded the theory that the Soviets still regard the Baltic as a "Russian lake." This leads them to the rationale that harassment is a natural part of maintaining control. If the Swedes, Finns, or even Danes and Norwegians--react to this Soviet aggressiveness by protesting against incursions, the Soviets become even more aggressive. Curiously, the Soviet Union does not seem to see the paradox in advocating a nuclear-free zone at the same time as it continues to harass its neighbors. There was an obvious difference of attitude between the Swedish Foreign and Defense Ministry officials towards the Soviets as compared to that of the Socialist Party majority. While perhaps not deluding themselves about the Soviets, Palme and his friends still believe they can act as intermediaries between the superpowers, and, therefore, hesitate to criticize the Soviets openly.

The Swedes were ambivalent in discussing the famous Nordic nuclear-free zone. Palme has been wedded to the scheme for so long that he has refused to give it up or modify it even in the face of the submarine incursions. The key problem is whether the Soviets would refrain from sending nuclear-armed submarines through the Baltic. When asked this question by Swedish officials, the Soviets have taken the line that when and if the Nordic NATO powers (Denmark and Norway) promise to exclude all nuclear weapons, in wartime as well as peacetime, they (the Soviets) would consider the necessary steps. It was clear that the Swedish defense experts whom I saw did not put much faith in Palme's nuclear-free zone. Nevertheless, they made it clear that it was politically important to maintain the NNFZ as a possible Swedish initiative when the CDE opens in January.

In discussions about the CDE, it was easy to discern that the Swedish Foreign Office is paying a great deal of attention to it, not only as the host country but in looking for ways in which Sweden can, as a leader of the NNA group, negotiate compromises between East and West. The Swedes stressed that agreement on CBM's (confidence-building measures) was important to them and that they would be advocating the adoption of as many as possible of these when the conference begins. The Swedes expressed the thought that if the INF talks became stalemated or if the Russians walked out (as they now have), the CDE would become the prime venue for East-West contact on arms control. It may be difficult to dampen their enthusiasm for what CDE can possibly accomplish. As the host country and self-proclaimed leader of the NNA group, Sweden is ready to make the most out of CDE.

Norway

Despite its proximity to Sweden, Norwegian attitudes differ enormously. Supporting the exposed Northern flank of NATO, Norwegians are well-aware of the responsibility they bear; some feel that they are asked by the Alliance to do more than they should; others that their contribution is too much taken for-granted; and a third group stressing that without arms control progress, Norway will be unduly exposed.

The present Norwegian government exists with only a one-vote majority. Under the Constitution elections are held every four years, not when the government is upset or Parliament dissolved. Each MP has a deputy who may or may not agree with his principal's policy. If occasionally the sitting MP cannot be present for a key vote, it is possible that his deputy would vote the other way. What is more likely and more frightening is that in the event of an MP's death, his deputy would take over. A change of only one vote would bring down the government. Despite the cliff-hanging aspects of this, the Willoch regime has remained steadfast in its determination to support the Alliance on INF.

Amb. Austad is a pessimist and told me he fears that growing anti-Americanism on the part of Norwegian youth, who would rather be "red than dead," will weaken Norway's resolve. Austad had just returned from a vist to Tromso in the north where he believed he was a victim of a plot to embarrass him. Not only was he picked up by the police in the middle of the night and quickly released, but he found himself the target of a hostile audience which he was addressing on our Central American policy. His exploits were described in the press in a manner which he described as "degrading." Austad observed that the citizens of Tromso and surroundings were basically sympathetic to the Russians who had liberated them at the end of the war and that they were, therefore, more susceptible to present-day Soviet propaganda.

In a meeting with Foreign Office diplomats, the mood was also pessimistic. Leif Mevik, Ambassador to CSCE and Acting Political Director, did not accept the Ambassador's thesis that anti-Americanism was growing rapidly. He said Norwegian public opinion often differed with American policy on specific issues, but it was not an endemic problem. Nuclear issues and whaling were two points where the GON felt we were insensitive to its points of view. Concerning the INF, Mevik stressed that there be "continued evidence of American credibility" and a display of American good-will. Particularly, Mevik observed it was essential that there be complete frankness in the SCG meetings. This was a crucial moment for public opinion and the image of the Alliance to the outside world must be one of unity. Furthermore, it was important to Norwegians that the US continue to be sensitive to European public opinion and not to let the Soviets take the initiative.

Like the Swedes, Mevik and his colleagues felt strongly that the new CDE conference in Stockholm would provide the venue for serious proposals leading to greater stability. They stressed the need for greater attention being given to CBM's at the CDE conference, hoping that the Alliance would come up with a "tough but credible package." Furthermore, Mevik thought NATO members should not automatically reject proposals by the NNA countries, as it was important to keep the neutrals on our side. The Norwegians believe the Soviets will table unreasonable proposals when the CDE conference opens, but that they will adjust to the realities and back down, if faced by a solid front of NATO and NNA countries.

In discussing bilateral relations with the Soviets, the Norwegian diplomats observed that until the late 70's there had been few problems. Since that time, however, Soviet aggressiveness in relation to Svalbard had become most evident and was harder to deal with than before. Furthermore, the Soviets continued to ignore the Norwegian 12-mile limit, violating the sea frontier at will and probing with their submarines. Nevertheless, the Norwegian viewpoint was that Soviet build-up on the Kola Peninsula was not aimed at the Norwegians but was rather part of Soviet global strategy.

In dealing with this new Soviet boldness, the Norwegians, however, did not believe in confrontation. On the contrary, they thought that the more trade, commerce and cultural exchange which could take place, the better. Increased relationships would tend to undercut Soviet hegemony and prevent them from over-aggression.

Later I discussed Norway's position with Bernt Bull, Foreign Affairs specialist in the Labor Party and formerly Friedland's Special Assistant. Bull said Labor has been divided on the 1979 NATO decision but more recently had decided to oppose the two-track decision and fight against deployment. He cited Egon Bahr's

reasons for opposing the Allied position. Bull was particularly vehement when speaking of the Conservatives, now in the government, whom he said had violated the traditional Foreign Policy consensus, He observed that Labor had opposed entry into the EC but would now favor such an entry if only to counter-balance those in the EC who supported closer relations with the US. This contrasted with the Foreign Office officials who regretted Norway's absence from the EC on political not economic grounds. In other words, they felt that many decisions were being made in the EC under the head of political consultation which directly concerned Norway. Consequently, they would prefer all security questions to be handled in NATO where their voice could be heard.

Finally, a discussion with John Ausland, retired FSO and former DCM in Oslo, brought out the point that many Norwegians indulged in an ostrich-like attitude, refusing to face up to the Soviet menace. This was particularly true in the North where they were keeping a very low profile and were loath to do anything (maneuvers, pre-positioning, etc.) which would in any way agitate the Soviets. Ausland's new book in Norwegian on the Soviet menace and the need for greater Norwegian defense expenditures has created quite a furor and some ruffled feathers. He also mentioned the break-down of the traditional post-war policy consensus. His conclusion, however, was that any attempt to regain the consensus would weaken Norway and would be a victory for Labor's appeasement approach.

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Denmark

Returning to Denmark after a five-year absence was a stimulating experience. Little had changed on the surface--the same key diplomats were in the Foreign Office, Peter Dyvig and Eigel Jorgensen; the Prime Minister's chief advisor, Henning Gottlieb, was still there and so was the Chief of Defense, Gen. Knut Jorgensen. They were all frank with me in trying to interpret present-day Danish policy and thinking. Though they did not obviously speak with one voice, their enthusiasm for the present Conservative government as compared to the Social Democrats was almost unrestrained. They felt that finally Denmark was returning to sanity on economic policy and that brakes were at last being applied to the welfare state.

The foreign policy picture was cloudier. The traditional center majority consensus of Social Democrats, Liberals and Conservatives, which had always backed NATO, was beginning to unravel. Former Prime Minister Anker Jorgensen, in the eyes of my Danish friends, had gone off the deep end and lost all sense of responsibility. Anker was well-aware of the delicate balance in Danish politics; yet he was not averse to attacking the government for trying to meet its NATO commitments.

These diplomats felt that if Denmark were forced to go to NATO advocating some sort of compromise formula on INF, this would greatly weaken Denmark's credibility in the eyes of its partners. This is exactly what has since happened to the chagrin of most Danish diplomats. Anticipating that such might be the case, the argument was advanced that even a waffly-conservative government would be far preferable to another round of Social Democracy. The Conservative coalition, weak as it may be, can at least be counted on to maintain Denmark's present NATO commitments and not to retreat to a posture of ostrich-like neutralism.

One diplomat, speaking quite frankly, said that the Soviets were well-aware of the Danish coalition and were working relentlessly to stir up the peace movement, to entice the Social Democrats not only to oppose INF but also NATO, and to agitate the leftist youth against the US. Soviet diplomats, fluent in Danish, were once again active all over town after a couple of years of keeping a low profile. According to my friends, the Foreign Office was divided on the question as to whether the Minister, Uffe Elleman-Jensen, should move ahead with his plans for a Moscow trip. The rationale for going was to preempt the limelight from the Social Democrats who had considered such a trip and could have been unwitting dupes for Soviet propaganda.

In any case, Uffe subsequently went to Moscow, seemed to resent Soviet blandishments, and gave us a full read-out on what had happened. One further point of note in Danish-Soviet relations was a recent Soviet request to open a consulate in Greenland. We were told that the request was refused on the grounds that no foreign representation was permitted in Greenland, inasmuch as all of Greenland's external relations were handled in Copenhagen--a rather facile explanation but one which apparently the Soviets had to swallow.

Apart from the officials I saw, my old Danish friends were generally pessimistic. They felt that despite an improved economy and a conservative regime for the first time since 1902, the mood was neutralist, anti-American, and one ready to concede anything to the Soviets, provided that Denmark be left alone in any future confrontation. The younger generation, which far outnumber those who remember the liberation and the Marshall Plan, is very wont to equalize the two super-powers in a "pox on both"-like attitude. These friends had no very concrete ideas to suggest except that we should step up our USIS program, stressing that we were continuously trying to bring the Soviets to the negotiating table.

Danish attitudes are unlikely to change. We will continue to benefit from a very close intelligence relationship with the Danes which will permit us to share Soviet submarine movements, etc. The Danish military is equally tuned to a pro-American, pro-NATO role, but the constitutional pluralism provided for in the Folketing is such that strong positions taken by any party can quickly be knocked down by the others.

The Danes believe they are heading for an election, but each of the two factions hesitates to go to the voters for opposing reasons. The Social Democrats think that the revival of the economy will work in favor of the Conservatives, while the Conservative coalition believes that the INF issue would help the Social Democrats. Maneuvering, therefore, has focussed on blaming the other side for the crisis. If the Schlueter government fails for economic reasons; for example, if the opposition brings it down on a budget cut proposal, Schlueter believes the voters would support him at the polls. If Schlueter has to win on a pro-NATO, pro-INF platform, however, it could become dicier, and we could see Anker back at the helm. Therefore, our Danish friends hope we will bear with them and allow them to meet the election threat in their own way. With the mood of the country becoming more pacifist and neutralist, the present leaders are afraid to stick their necks too far out for fear of losing them altogether.

Netherlands

Moving south from Scandinavia, one finds a greater degree of realism. While the Netherlands are divided on support of INF, the present government seems determined to stick by its commitment. Nevertheless, hopes were strong among the Dutch that the dual-track approach in Geneva could lead to a compromise which would not require GLCM deployment in the Netherlands.

Former Prime Minister Van Agt, whom I met at a dinner given by Amb. Bremer, was quite optimistic that the Netherlands would go along with the deployment question. Former Amb. Geri Joseph pushed him hard on questions about the Dutch commitment, but he was convinced that the Liberals and a great majority of the CDA would stand fast. Other leading Dutch figures at the dinner like former Prime Minister Zijlstra agreed but appeared to be more sensitive to the public relations aspects of the planned demonstrations.

Unlike many other countries, the demonstrations in Holland had the solid backing of the churches and seemed to be free of the lunatic fringe element, so prevalent elsewhere. Peace organizers were expected to aim their propaganda at MP's rather than at the public at large. This is in fact what happened when the large demonstrations were held on October 29. There were estimated to be 500,000 participants, but they were peaceful, benefited from good weather and excellent organization, and appeared to enjoy the country-fair atmosphere.

The Embassy predicted (it turned out correctly) that the peace movement fervor would decline after the October 29 demonstrations. Polls have shown that, contrary to public perceptions that the demonstrations represented a cross-section of Dutch opinion, 92% of the demonstrators supported the Labor Party or parties even

further to the left. Half of the demonstrators were from parties which only picked up 6% of the vote in the latest elections. Nevertheless, the Dutch government is being careful to handle the peace movement gingerly and to avoid any type of violence which would create sympathy for demonstrators.

Amembassy Hague is active in public diplomacy and its officers use every occasion they can find to explain the US position on arms control, either publicly or privately. This seems to have paid off. Dutch leaders naturally hoped that there would be some encouraging sign from the Soviets on the two-track dialogue, which would have offered the occasion for some delay. When this did not happen, however, Prime Minister Lubbers defended the government's position in Parliament and held the line on INF. In a conversation with Political Director Adrian Jacobovitz, an old friend from Nairobi, I was told that the MFA was nervous about the debate and the effects of the peace movement on a number of MP's. Given the results, it seems that Jacobovitz was unduly worried. Nevertheless, the danger remains in the future that another debate--perhaps tied to the publishing of the Dutch White Paper on nuclear strategy--could see some serious slippage. This would most likely come about through a split in the CDA, some members of which are seeking new ways of compromise and have suggested holding up deployment until further negotiations take place.

A conclusion on the state of the Netherlands, however, is positive. Signs of increased reserves of North Sea gas, liberalization of petroleum sales, and a trend towards a freer enterprise system have given impetus to the Dutch economy. The center-right coalition has weathered the INF debate and seems ready to stick by the deployment decision. Fears that violent demonstrations would deflect Dutch determination seem overdrawn. There is still the dichotomy between a large majority for NATO and a smaller majority against INF, but this seems manageable, especially if the West will continue to negotiate seriously.

Belgium

The Belgian situation continues to be confused by the linguistic fracas. The Socialists, based principally in Flemish-speaking Antwerp, are most vocal in their opposition to INF deployment. Congen Gewecke explained that many Flemish Socialists tended to equate the US and the Soviets, that they supported the nuclear freeze, a no-first use declaration, and a 300-km security zone. The Antwerp-based Flemish tend to empathize more with their Dutch anti-nuclear neighbors in the Netherlands Labor Party than with Francophone Socialists in Wallonia.

A contrast in strategy was offered by Pierre Galand, President of CNAPD (National Action Committee for Peace and Development), with whom I had breakfast. This relatively moderate Francophone

organization had hoped to provide the umbrella for the entire country's demonstrations. As it turned out, Galand was able to stir up some enthusiasm among francophones but did not have much luck with the more radical Flemish. Galand's game plan was to convince mayors and communal leaders of the need to accept de-militarized zones in their respective towns. In theory these local officials would then put pressure on their respective MP's, who in turn would have influence on cabinet decisions, thereby forcing Prime Minister Martens and Foreign Minister Tindemans to shy away from deployment or seek to postpone it.

On 23 October, a massive demonstration took place with an estimated 300,000 participants. Despite the demonstrators' demands that nuclear weapons be dismantled in Europe, including the SS-20's, and that the two superpowers freeze their stocks, it seems clear that the demonstrations did not deflect the GOB from moving ahead with plans for GLCM deployment in Florennes. Nevertheless, the fact that the demonstrations were serious and not frivolous and were backed by so many different groups may well be a factor in future elections.

Social effects resulting from the poor economic situation may be more serious than the political over the long run. Belgium has close to 15% unemployment, using the same criteria as we do, but this is not so severely felt since unemployment benefits cover almost the same amount. Education, medical benefits, pension, etc. are still lavish by our standards and not even the center-right government has dared to monkey with the welfare state. Fractional divisions within Belgium, not only linguistic but regional and social, have meant that recent Belgian governments have not had the flexibility to break out of the mold, to innovate, or to come up with any new ideas. Our Embassy believes we may encourage the Belgians along these lines, but that their suspicion of our motives, both political and economic, will not make them listen easily or react creatively.

Brussels, of course, is not only the Belgian capital but the home of NATO and the EC. Amb. Vest shared some thoughts on Europe's future and its relations with the US. Internal discussions, rivalries between the Commission and the European Parliament, and competition with the US are all factors which must be closely watched. On the latter subject, one must deal with specialty steel, fats and oils, and high technology transfer. All these are subjects which are emotive and tend to blind both sides from the more fundamental US-European relationship. Some problems seem intract-able and cannot be blamed on European intransigeance alone; others will eventually be resolved if there is goodwill on both sides.

The political consultation dimension of the EC is growing, not always in a way which suits US interests. The Irish are embarrassed to have to take positions on security issues which should rightfully

not be set before them. Conversely, the Norwegians find that many issues important to them are handled in an EC context instead of a NATO one. The French, straddling the NATO consultation system, are happier with the EC format. EPC, as it is known, is undergoing some traumas now in the Greek presidency; obviously Spanish and Portuguese adhesion will make this even more complicated. But our officers in USEC do not see the clock turning back. Europe's future integration, at whatever pace, will not necessarily be at our expense, but it will still cause us enormous headaches.

The other leg of the Brussels triad--NATO--offers a different optique. Our NATO mission remains reasonably optimistic. The European NATO allies have stood firm on INF deployment, they have appreciated the constant and careful briefings in the SCG and by our arms negotiators, and there is no danger of alliance "decoupling." However, those countries which advocate an increase in conventional forces do not seem to face realistically the costs involved to meet SACEUR's 4% goal. USNATO's new approach is to improve arms cooperation, expand the "two-way street," and stimulate new research in the arms field which would foster improved high-tech potential among European allies. This approach is still in its infancy and will have to contend with protectionist sentiments both here and in Europe.

FRG

It would be presumptuous after a brief visit to Bonn to come up with many profound impressions. The FRG and its mood in 1983 have been well-covered by excellent Embassy reporting, and the roles of the various Bundestag factions are well-documented. Nevertheless, what strikes a new visitor to Germany is not so much the current debate on INF, though this is extremely important, but rather the uncertain mood of so many Germans, especially the youth. Discussions with Embassy officers and several old German friends brought out this feeling.

Several deliberations on this mood may be worthy of note. There is a need to establish identity which premeates the thinking of perhaps all of the body politic except the Conservatives over 50 years old who hold fast to the American alliance as the basis of their thinking. The question "What is a German anyhow?" seems to be at the root of this "angst." In seeking to establish a feeling of patriotism, the FRG authorities are at a loss as to where to turn. Obviously, inner-German relations complicate the issue. It is still anathema to West Germans to write off the East or to give up the idea of reunification, even though most will tell you realistically that there is no chance for it within the foreseeable future.

The younger generation suffers from a romanticism about the past, which results in an anti-modern approach to life. This manifests itself in sentiments which go all the way from dislike

of autobahns because they hurt the environment to an antipathy for both Soviets and Americans who have complicated their lives by involving them in East-West rivalry. This feeling of equating the two superpowers is damaging, as those who believe they are equally malevolent tend to forget the material and security advantages from which the FRG has benefited in the post-war years as a member of NATO.

The generation gap in Germany seem more evident than elsewhere in Western Europe or even here. One senior Foreign Office diplomat, Bill Haas, told me that his four children supported the four parties--three sons, the CDU, the SPD, and the FDP, and the daughter, the Greens. Haas was philosophical about this but made the observation to prove the point that German youths would no longer take political guidance from their elders. Nevertheless, he stressed that today's youth no longer carry feelings of guilt for the Nazi era and should not indulge in self-pity. Still self-pity plays a significant role; the young German has not found himself and he tends to blame others--his elders, Americans and sometimes Soviets--for all his ills. Added to this is a sense of cultural pessimism which takes the form of a surfeit of emotionalism and a longing for a Hegelian order of yesteryear.

This identity crisis serves as a backdrop for the INF debate which has so gripped the FRG this fall. As Egon Bahr has observed on numerous occasions, this year marks the first time that a majority of the population does not support the traditional tenets of the German-American relationship. One could add, of course, that Egon Bahr is one of those guilty of breaking up the foreign affairs consensus. Bahr and others in the SPD who favor a conventional build-up, as opposed to INF deployment, have not faced up to the economic consequences or bothered to explain to their SPD followers the cost factor.

One oft-noted aspect of the INF debate was the way in which the Soviets had overplayed their hand. Less obvious was the fact that before the Bundestag debate Soviet dignitaries streamed through the FRG denouncing INF deployment. Kohl reacted to this Soviet overkill and thereby enhanced his own image with the voters. Nevertheless, some Germans were seduced by Soviet suggestions that West Berlin could be incorporated in the FRG if Pershings were excluded, but thousands of ethnic Germans could be released from the Soviet Union, and that even reunification could be considered absent American missiles. These seductive offers, while not taken seriously by the Bonn government, were still music to the ears of many Germans and tantalizing to some younger generation listeners.

Fortunately, the numerous October demonstrations took place with a minimum of violence. Germans are sensitive, given their history, about being charged with police brutality, and sometimes

bend over backward to avoid confrontation. Troubles not only with INF protestors but with terrorists, criminals, some Turkish gastarbeiters, and even with Greens in Parliament have left the government open to cries of weakness on one side and inhumanity on the other. If the Kohl regime had made the INF debate more of an issue appearing to serve German interests rather than one perceived as focussed on the Americans, support might have been stronger.

Finally, a number of observers, who were rightfully convinced that the Bundestag would oppose deployment, made the point that the next round will be more difficult. At the beginning of 1984, Kohl will have to offer up something new and in order to do this will be pressing for greater American flexibility, either at CDE or in the arms control fora, should they reopen.

UK

A weekend wedding in the English countryside and a day or two in London are not designed to make one an overnight expert on the UK. Nevertheless, discussions with British friends, particularly an all-day session at FCO arranged by the Intelligence Liaison Office in the British Embassy in Washington, did provide some useful insights. Meetings were arranged by Robert Flower, of the FCO Permanent Under Secretary's Office, with members of the planning staff involved in assessments and intelligence-gathering, including Peter Hall, Richard Bone, and Steven Boys-Smith, the Irish expert. Additional meetings were held with Harry Burke and Robin O'Neill, the latter being Sir Anthony Duff's intelligence coordinator. Finally, Soviet experts Chris Hill and David Miller and Cyprus expert Normam Hodnett took time to brief me, as did Simon Fuller and Rob Young, NATO and WE experts respectively in the FCO proper.

Comments on the UK itself were made by a number of these officials, even though much of the conversation concentrated on peripheral problems--Falklands, Ireland, Argentina, Cyprus and the UK's European role. Several British FSO's commented that for the first time in their careers they had been asked to go out to the hustings and explain INF to the British citizens. They had found this rather trying after dealing with staid diplomats all their lives; they certainly did not relish debates with some of the Greenham Common ladies.

In analyzing the peace movement in the UK, these officials thought it had peaked and that only a lunatic fringe would continue to demonstrate. Nevertheless, they admitted that even without the punks and crazies, the UK peace movement had deep roots which no government could ignore. They felt that the UK elections had taken the sting out of the peace movement before it could mount a campaign similar to the one in the FRG. The early Greenham Common rallies, in the eyes of these officials, had discredited the peace movement.

There was a lack of seriousness, a "rent-a-crowd" psychology which many British citizens resented.

A major propaganda effort has been made by the FCO to show that deployment of GLCM's is in the British interest, not just because the Americans want them there. A brief Ministry of Defense "white paper," now being widely disseminated, summarizes the historical reasons for having US forces in the UK. It lists the various bases on which Americans are stationed, including Greenham Common, where "USAF B-47 nuclear bombers have always been under the same arrangements now prvoided for the cruise missiles." The paper goes on to argue that for deterrence to succeed, the USSR should be in no doubt that the US will defend Western Europe. The deployment of American forces in the UK is the most visible proof of the US' readiness to regard the security of their allies as inseparable."

A number of the officials made the point that the UK had avoided a full defense debate for over 15 years, so that all the accumulated support for nuclear modernization, both by the UK itself and by US forces, as well as antipathy towards it, had been swept under the carpet. A combination of secrecy and apathy meant that the British public was not psychologically ready for arrival of the GLCM's. These officials felt that, while HMG has prepared itself well in Parliament, a great deal more missionary work needed to be done to explain, as the White Paper tries to do, that cruise missiles are needed for the defense of Britain and not just to benefit the United States.

Turning to the peace movements in other basing countries, my Foreign Office friends were nervous about German steadfastness. Conceding that the CDU could win the deployment issue in the Bundestag, the British officials still felt that a sugar-coated Soviet offer coming early in 1984 could wreak havoc with the next deployment round unless it could be shown that the Soviets refused to negotiate again. These officials were more sanguine about Italian resolve, believing that the peace movement has been discredited in Italy, since it was led by the PCI.

In discussing the EC and the future of economic Europe, the British diplomats were far more pessimistic. Rob Young, who handles Western Europe in FCO, said "this is one of most trying periods in decades for Europe." Agricultural arguments with the French, debates over the budget, and expansion of the EC had the British wringing their hands. Given the recent debate in Athens, their pessimism seems justified.

Leaving Europe proper, my Foreign Office friends turned to the peripheral areas. They made it clear that US military sales to Argentina were of great importance to them, and that the more bellicose Argentina became, the more resources the UK would have to commit to the Falklands. These officials tried to point out the irony of withdrawing British resources from NATO in order to bolster

the Falklands against an Argentina supported by US arms sales. This discussion took place before the Argentine election, which hopefully will put British-Argentine relations on a new plane, but at the time, and this was substantiated by our Embassy, every British official speaking to an American one took the opportunity of stressing the danger of US arms sales to Argentina.

If the British seemed intransigeant on Argentina, they seemed more far-sighted and flexible on Gibralter. Robin O'Neill said that the UK would like Spain to go back to the Lisbon Agreement, at least as a starting point. The British were at least ready to make changes with mirrors, if not substantively. These could include putting up all the NATO flags, naming a low-ranking British naval officer to serve under a Spanish admiral, and sitting on the locals whose anti-Spanish rhetoric has not been helpful. HMG has even been trying to take some perks away from Prime Minister Hassan and his friends in order to make them more tractable and less pro-British. In short, the British position is that keeping Spain in NATO is more important than maintaining the Union Jack over the Rock, so perhaps there are signs of British flexibility.

One interesting sidelight was mentioned. An Argentine hit-team of frog men had been picked up by Spanish police before they managed to get into Gibralter to attach bombs to frigates. The Spanish covered up the arrest of the Argentines and shipped them back home.

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The British thoughts on Cyprus are outdated because of the subsequent UDI. However, their expert thought this likely, despite the fact that Turkish Cypriot Communists opposed the idea, inasmuch as the Soviets suspected that UDI would result in another NATO base. The British are very worried that under UDI, the Greek Cypriots will feel free to tear up their arrangements with the UK and demand British withdrawal. This would, of course, mean closing the SIGINT facility, which is so important to NSA. When the Italians asked if they could use the British base for logistical support to their MNF contingent, the British were afraid that such a use would have drawn undue attention to the facility and almost refused. However, British overall policy required helping the Italians; fortunately, what went on at the base was not questioned either by the Italians or the Cypriots, and the problem did not arise.